Report

Number 1

Negotiations for Peace in Central America

A Conference Report
by
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Proceedings of the Roundtable
on Negotiations for Peace in Central America

Ottawa, 27-28 September 1985

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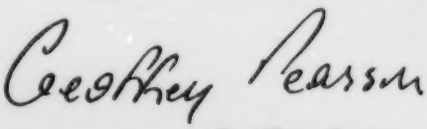
Preface

The Act of Parliament which created the Institute stated that part of its purpose was to encourage public discussion of issues of international peace and security. One of the ways in which the Institute seeks to achieve this objective is by playing an active role in conferences which address these subjects. It is interested in attending such conferences, in helping to sponsor them financially, and, on occasion, in organizing them.

The first conference in which the Institute participated and of which it was a sponsor was the Roundtable on Negotiations for Peace in Central America, the proceedings of which are contained in this report.

This conference, which took place in Ottawa in September 1985, brought together an impressive array of experts on Central America from Canada, the United States, Latin America and Europe. They discussed the problems of an area in which conflict is endemic and where the possibility of outside military intervention remains a serious threat. It is also an area in which a great many Canadian non-governmental organizations take considerable interest and play an active role. This report appears at a time when Central America is once again front-page news.

The Institute intends to publish a series of such reports providing accounts of conferences with which it has been associated. We hope that these will be of use, not only to those who attend the various conferences, but also to students and to those members of the general public who are interested in the matters which are discussed. The second report, which is due to appear shortly, will be devoted to the proceedings of the conference on Challenges to Deterrence which was organized by the Institute, in October 1985.



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Negotiations for Peace in Central America

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Summary of the proceedings of the Roundtable
on Negotiations for Peace in Central America
Ottawa, 27-28 September 1985

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INTRODUCTION

The Roundtable on Negotiations for Peace in Central America was organized to discuss possible policy initiatives for bilateral and multilateral action, likely to de-escalate conflicts in Central America and to strengthen the Contadora peace process. Canada was considered a unique location for holding the Roundtable. Concern for the attainment of peace and social justice has increased steadily among the Canadian public in recent years, and a variety of non-governmental organizations have become actively involved in the debate concerning alternative policies for the region. Backed by this significant public support, the Government of Canada has indicated not only its interest in and support for a negotiated resolution of the conflicts, but has also provided specific commentary and technical advice to Contadora on the verification and control mechanisms needed for the effective implementation of a peace accord. Moreover, Canada has important bilateral aid programmes in the region and has accepted an increasing number of refugees.

The Roundtable was consequently designed to promote discussion of ways of creating political will and other pre-conditions necessary for obtaining negotiated settlements to the conflicts in Central America. The focus was on the development of new policy initiatives for multilateral action and the constructive involvement of nations, such as Canada, which can play a mediating role.

Thirty-five persons – academics, government officials and representatives of a broad range of non-governmental organizations – from Latin America, the United States, Europe and Canada participated in four discussion sessions, held over two days from 27 to 28 September 1985. These were devoted to the following themes: creating conditions for de-escalation and opportunities for pursuing a peace agreement; possible third party and multilateral roles and initiatives for nations not involved in Contadora or in the conflicts; requirements for the effective implementation of de-escalation measures and of a regional peace accord; conclusions and recommendations. Rather than presenting position papers, participants were asked to respond to a set of questions, which are reproduced together with summaries of the proceedings of the sessions, in section II of this report. The summaries are organized thematically, following the sequence of the questions posed rather than the actual sequence of the discussion. No participants are identified in the text since the sessions were held *in camera*.

An "Open Forum" was held as the concluding event of the Roundtable. Three participants from abroad were asked to make brief presentations concerning the discussion and their understanding of the nature of the crisis in Central America. Their presentations were followed by commentaries from three members of Parliament, representing Canada's three political parties.

A brief description of the nature and dimensions of the Central American crisis (Section I) precedes the summary of the Roundtable proceedings. All socio-economic statistical data provided is drawn from the studies of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC); information on human rights conditions is drawn from the reports of the prestigious Americas Watch Committee; *The Arms Control Reporter* and *Strategic Survey 1984-1985* are the basic sources on the current situation and the Contadora process.

Finally, it should be noted that most Roundtable participants had not had an opportunity to review the September 1985 Contadora draft treaty at the time that these meetings were held in Ottawa.

The Roundtable was sponsored by:

Canadian Association for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CALACS)
Canada-Caribbean-Central America Policy Alternatives (CAPA)
Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLAC), York University, Toronto

In co-operation with:

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I.

THE CRISIS IN CENTRAL AMERICA

> Revolutions . . . are unique.
>
> They are born from concrete local circumstances and nothing on earth can create them artificially.
>
> It was not Louis XVI who imposed revolution on the Thirteen Colonies, and it is not the Soviet Union who can impose revolution on Latin America.
>
> Carlos Fuentes[1]

1. The Historical Context

The basic characteristics of Central American societies emerged during the latter half of the nineteenth century as they entered world markets as exporters of primary agricultural commodities. The social, political and economic structures deriving from that process were: dependence on a single export crop; a marked concentration of land and wealth in the hands of an interlinked network of élite families, often referred to as the "export oligarchies"; the expropriation of the properties of small holders and the communal lands of the indigenous peoples in order to convert the rural population into a landless labour force for export agriculture; the widespread use of physical coercion to ensure labour discipline and political stability, and consequently the predominance of military and police forces in the political power structure. With the exception of Costa Rica, where small holders retained land thus creating the social base for a more democratic form of development, all the Central American countries experienced these processes in varying degrees and sequences between the 1850s and the Great Depression of the 1930s.

US hegemony over the region was established during the same period as the Caribbean was converted into an "American lake." As early as 1855-56, American adventurer William Walker, with support from a US administration interested in the construction of a trans-isthmian canal, managed to establish control over Nicaragua for a brief period. But it was at the turn of the century that United

[1] Carlos Fuentes, *Latin America at War With the Past* (Montreal: CBC Enterprises, 1985), p. 49

States expansionism began to manifest itself systematically. Even before its intervention in the Cuban War of Independence (1895-98) and the acquisition of the right to construct a canal across Panama, through its support for that outlying Colombian province's demands for independence, the United States adopted the "big stick" and "dollar diplomacy" in its relations toward the Caribbean region as a whole. The "Roosevelt Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine maintained that the United States, as a "civilized" nation, had the right to end "chronic wrongdoing" in the Americas and therefore could intervene directly in the internal affairs of the region's nations.

Indeed, between 1898 and 1932, the United States intervened militarily in ten Caribbean nations a total of 34 times. Its occupation forces ran the governments of the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Nicaragua, Haiti and Panama for long periods; Honduras, Mexico, Guatemala and Costa Rica experienced shorter interventions. United States trade and investment in the region (most notably, the fruit companies) expanded under this diplomatic and military protection. The spirit of the times was reflected in the 1931 recollections of General D.S. Butler:

> I spent thirty three years [in the Marine Corps] . . . most of the time being a high class muscleman for big business, for Wall Street and bankers. In short, I was a muscleman for capitalism. I helped purify Nicaragua . . . I helped make Mexico safe for oil interests. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Haiti and Nicaragua a decent place for the National City Bank boys. I helped in the rape of a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street.

Already during this period the United States justified its actions, and its support for local oligarchies which were being challenged by popular protest and rebellion, by reference to US security interests. The subversive threat, in the twenties, was ascribed to "Mexican Bolshevism". As might be expected, the first political and literary expressions of Central American nationalism and anti-Americanism also date from the first decades of the twentieth century.

Following the crisis of the Great Depression, the Central American export economies were reactivated during the Second World War. The region then experienced a 30 year period of dynamic growth: gross domestic product grew at an annual rate of 5.3 percent in real

terms between 1950 and 1978. However, in the words of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC), growth was "superimposed" upon the existing structures and its fruits "were distributed in a flagrantly inequitable manner".[1]

Agricultural production was diversified as cotton, sugar and beef were added to the traditional coffee and banana exports. However, the production of staples for local consumption was neglected and the region's countries began to depend on increasingly expensive food imports. As more and more land was converted to export production, the process of dispossession of small and medium rural property holders accelerated once again, after having been halted during the Depression years. Thus the size of the semi-employed rural population, whose labour was needed only during the harvest season on the increasingly mechanized rural estates, increased dramatically. Rural migrants seeking employment opportunities swelled the size of the shanty towns which mushroomed around the major cities.

In the urban areas, the rapid growth of industry was not paralleled by an equivalent growth in employment opportunities, since the enterprises established by both foreign and local investors were capital intensive. In fact, labour intensive artisan industry was driven out of business by factory production. Factories also imported machinery and raw materials as well as intermediate inputs, thereby deepening dependency on foreign imports rather than establishing backward linkages with the national economy. And factory owners, particularly foreign corporations, expatriated capital rather than investing it locally. In this situation, the Central American Common Market, which had been organized in the fifties, only served to unify the high income markets of the member countries since approximately 80 percent of the population lacked sufficient income to purchase industrial goods.

In sum, the model of economic growth and diversification adopted by the Central American countries was fundamentally flawed since it reinforced existing inequalities within these societies and deepened an already acute dependency on external markets. The social consequences of this "superimposed" rather than transformative growth were disastrous.

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[1] *CEPAL Review*, April 1984

Towards 1980, 41.8 percent of the regional population (over 8.5 million people) could not satisfy its "biological-nutritional requirements". Another 21.9 percent (some 4.2 million) could not satisfy such basic needs as minimally decent housing, and safe drinking water. These two groups together made up 63.7 percent of the regional population – 24.8 percent of the population in Costa Rica, 68.1 in El Salvador, 71.1 in Guatemala, 68.2 in Honduras and 61.5 in Nicaragua. Simultaneously, the gap between the wealthiest and the poorest increased. The least skewed income distribution profile was to be found in Costa Rica, where the richest 20 percent received 49 percent of national income while the poorest 50 percent received 21 percent; in El Salvador, the figures were 66 percent for the richest and 21 percent for the bottom half; in Guatemala, 54.1 and 17.8 percent; in Honduras, 59.3 and 17 percent; and in Nicaragua, 58 and 16 percent. To sum up, gross inadequacies of nutrition, housing, education and medical care worsened while the further concentration of land ownership and the maldistribution of the benefits of economic growth became increasingly visible. All the problems associated with this growth model have reached crisis proportions since the late 1970s with the onset of the region's economic depression.

In the 1950's, and especially in the 1960's, moderately reformist political parties, unions, peasant associations and clergymen began to demand social, political and economic reforms. Their efforts to democratize the system were met with repression. The élites dug in to defend the status quo and shore up the historically violence prone and dictatorial political systems. The United States provided assistance to the military and the police which, in concert with the death squads which became prominent in the 1970's, drove heterogeneous opposition groups underground and then eventually, into armed rebellion.

2. **The Current Situation, 1979-1985**

The overthrow of the Somoza "family dynasty" in Nicaragua, by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) on 19 July 1979, marked a watershed in Central America's historical evolution. The coalition that ousted the Somoza dictatorship was so broad – ranging from peasants, workers, shanty town dwellers, students and parish priests to the professional middle class, small and large-scale businessmen and church élites – that it was bound to encounter divisions as it moved from a revolutionary period to transforming socio-economic and political institutions in order to incorporate those sectors of the population which had been excluded from the

benefits of economic growth. The reaction of the Carter Administration to the Sandinista Revolution has been described as "more than a little schizophrenic". However, as the FSLN consolidated power, an effort to establish normal relations was made despite the fact that the new Nicaraguan regime had brought in Cuban advisors to reorganize the military and to provide assistance in the development of literacy and public health programmes. Relations were then strained by Nicaraguan aid (during 1980-1981) to the revolutionary movement in El Salvador, the coalition of the Democratic Revolutionary Front and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FDR-FMLN).

The Carter Administration had supported the civilian-military junta which ousted the Romero dictatorship (1976-1979) in El Salvador through a coup d'état in October 1979. The civilian members of the October junta attempted to carry out moderate reforms in order to prevent a descent into civil war. However, the reformists (including current FDR head Guillermo Ungo) failed to consolidate their power and could not control either the military or the related extreme right-wing death squads; consequently, most of them had resigned by early January 1980. The conservative sector of the Christian Democratic party stepped in to assume the positions left by these resignations while the party's left wing, together with the civilians who had formed and supported the October coup, joined the revolutionary opposition, thus forming the FDR in the spring of 1980. Meanwhile, four armed opposition groups joined together in the FMLN. It was to the combined FDR-FMLN opposition that the Sandinista Government provided military aid, when it tried to organize a "final offensive" in January 1981 against the reconstituted junta controlled by the military but ostensibly headed by Christian Democrat José Napoléon Duarte, and supported by the United States.

Thus the Reagan Administration assumed office as the FSLN was providing assistance to the Salvadorean insurgents. In Guatemala also, there had been a significant upsurge of insurgent activity during the same period. However, the new United States Administration's policy toward Central America had already been outlined, prior to Reagan's election, in the "Santa Fé Document" which adopted the analysis of Jeane Kirkpatrick, later United States ambassador to the United Nations, concerning the necessity of supporting "friendly authoritarian regimes", and which placed the conflicts in Central America in an East-West perspective. Although the Sandinistas had adopted a mixed economy model and main-

tained significant political pluralism, they were regarded as "totalitarian Marxist-Leninists" by the Reagan team.

Accordingly, in the initial months of Reagan's presidency, all aid to Nicaragua was cut off (it had already been suspended by Carter in reaction to the FSLN support to the Salvadorean rebels); United States representatives to international financial institutions began to vote systematically against loans to Nicaragua and General Vernon Walters, then Secretary of State Alexander Haig's ambassador-at-large, was sent to discuss possible joint operations against Nicaragua with conservative Latin American governments. Later, Honduras became the staging area for the organization of a counter-revolutionary army: a grant of $19.9 million was authorized by the President in December 1981 to create a military force commanded by Somoza's ex-National Guardsmen.

By 1985, the Nicaraguan Democratic Front (FDN), operating from southern Honduras, numbered more than 15,000 soldiers. Together with the smaller, civilian-headed Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE), operating from Costa Rica, and an organization of Miskito indigenous refugees, they made up the *contras* who are carrying out the so-called "secret war" against Nicaragua. That war escalated in 1982 with the arrival of John Negroponte, United States ambassador to Honduras. With a CIA-station enlarged to at least 50 persons, Negroponte guided efforts to establish a territorial base for the *contras* inside Nicaragua. In March 1983, several thousand *contras*, backed by the Honduran army, invaded Nicaragua but were repelled. All subsequent efforts to establish a territorial base ended in similar failure despite the publicly acknowledged expenditure of approximately $100 million in United States aid.

The *contras*, as a consequence, turned to hit-and-run tactics. Their operations, together with US mining of Nicaraguan harbours in early 1984, the destruction of port and storage facilities, continuing CIA direction (the operations manual for the *contras* received broad publicity in 1985), and the United States trade embargo have been described by various observers as a "war of attrition" – "the bleeding to death" of Sandinista Nicaragua. The economic costs of this war for the Sandinista government have been calculated at more than one and a half billion US dollars and the political costs have also been heavy (unpopular obligatory conscription, various restrictions on civil liberties, and such like). Nevertheless, despite the war, the Sandinistas held elections in November 1984 in which seven political parties participated and

the opposition won approximately one third of the seats in the unicameral legislature. Americas Watch Committee and other internationally recognized human rights organizations consider Nicaragua's record of respect for human rights to be mixed; they are critical of the events which took place in the Miskito areas of the Atlantic coast during 1981-1982 and deplore arbitrary detentions as well as censorship of the press. Americas Watch has noted that human rights problems in the country "do not compare in scope or violent character with those common in the years of the Somoza dynasty or those committed by existing governments in neighboring Guatemala and El Salvador."[1] Conversely, the Committee has described United States Government accusations against the Sandinistas as grossly and wilfully distorted: "the Reagan administration has used human rights arguments with a profound cynicism and disregard for truth."

The United States participation in the *contra* war prompted the Nicaraguan government to take its case against the United States to the International Court of Justice, in April 1984. The United States responded by suspending for two years its recognition of the Court's jurisdiction on matters relating to Central America.

Congressional critics of the "secret war" succeeded in cutting off direct United States Government support of the *contras* in mid-1984. However, following Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega's May 1985 visit to Moscow to obtain Soviet petroleum, the administration obtained a renewal of aid, under the guise of "humanitarian assistance", by a small majority. Ortega's Moscow visit was itself a consequence of another facet of the "secret war" – the isolation of Nicaragua from major economic assistance and the prevention of normal expansion of its trade relations with the West.

The policies of the Reagan Administration in El Salvador were also directed toward a military solution to the civil war in that country. Military aid increased from $35.5 million in 1981 to $81 million in 1982, $81.3 million in 1983, and $196.55 million in 1984; it was projected at $128.2 million for 1985. President José Napoléon Duarte (inaugurated June 1984) has not obtained support from the military, the business élite or the United States for his call to "dialogue" with the revolutionary opposition. Duarte, on his side, insisted on acceptance of the present Constitution and the recognition of his government while the rebels, on the other hand, pro-

[1] Cynthia Brown (ed.), *With Friends Like These: The Americas Watch Report on Human Rights and US Policy in Latin America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), p. 156.

posed a formal cease-fire and the holding of a "national forum", leading to a new constitution and a reorganization of the military. The rebels do not accept Duarte's argument that he has fundamentally reformed those conditions which led to the rebellion.

With no progress in the "dialogue", the war escalated to "scorched earth" tactics and there was dramatically stepped-up bombardment with the use of combat helicopters obtained from the United States (the Salvadorean military's helicopter inventory increased from some fifteen in 1983 to as many as fifty by the end of 1984). United States aircraft, from new bases in Honduras, provided reconnaissance and intelligence support for Salvadorean army operations. Guerrilla numbers remained steady at 9-11,000 and the guerrillas responded to the army's new mobility and to the bombardments by changing their tactics, and spreading their units for small group operations.

The human rights situation, despite a reduction in assassinations, remained dreadful according to Americas Watch. Measures to investigate abuses by the military and police, to eliminate death squads and to bring violators to trial have not made any progress. New waves of killings have taken place, and one of the victims in January 1985 was the head of the government commission to investigate corruption. In addition to approximately 50,000 deaths, primarily from death squad violence and military repression, 20-25 percent of the Salvadorean population were refugees in and outside the country as of mid-1985. New waves of refugees continued to be produced as the war escalated.

Over the last five years, Honduras has also undergone an unprecedented process of militarization. The country has become the site for the largest military manoeuvres in the history of Central America, involving 35,941 United States military personnel and 11,200 Hondurans as of mid-1985. United States military aid to the country increased twentyfold, from $3.9 million in 1980 to $78.5 million in 1984. This amount does not include the costs of the military manoeuvres nor the buildup of the country's military infrastructure, which involves the enlargement of air strips, the construction of new roads along the Nicaraguan and Salvadorean borders, the establishment of six new radar bases, the building of new harbour facilities at Puerto Castilla on the Atlantic coast, the establishment of a Regional Military Training Centre (CREM) for the training of Salvadorean soldiers by United States Green Berets and the enlargement of existing military bases and the building of new ones throughout the country. These costs are calculated at more than

$200 million. Most observers agree that this represents more than an effort to stop the revolutionary movements in the region; Honduras is becoming the future home for the present US military bases in Panama, which are supposed to leave that country by the year 2000.

While the apparent United States goal of transforming Honduras into a powerful military bastion has been achieved rapidly and efficiently, it may have been at the expense of developing stable democratic institutions. Human rights violations have increased during the last few years, and observers have pointed out that Honduras' new regional role, which requires a strong army, is at odds with its democratization.

In Guatemala, the scale of government repression and human rights violations reached such proportions in the late seventies that the Carter Administration cancelled military aid. But the worst came after 1982 when the Guatemalan military opted for "scorched earth" tactics during the presidency of the religious fundamentalist, Efrain Rios Montt. Americas Watch observed: "the Guatemalan Government has overtly abandoned the rule of law and . . . overtly substituted a system of government that is both despotic and totalitarian." That repression, described as "genocidal" by various human rights organizations, continues up to the present with the country's indigenous people, who account for 50 percent of the population, being particularly victimized.

Although large-scale military aid was not resumed by the Reagan Administration, twenty-three helicopters fitted with 30-caliber machine guns were sold to Guatemala during 1981-1982 just prior to the military's recourse to "scorched earth" tactics. Moreover, Guatemalan air force pilots were trained in Texas while some aid (spare parts, the presence of a Green Beret counter-insurgency trainer and the like) was channelled through the back door.

To sum up, in the past five years, Central America has undergone a militarization and experienced an escalation of political conflicts and human rights violations both of which are unprecedented. The destruction of economic installations and the human losses have reached appalling proportions. Since 1978, some two million people have been made refugees and approximately 200,000 have lost their lives; many more have been wounded and maimed. Even democratic Costa Rica is experiencing political polarization as it becomes drawn into the regional conflicts.

3. **The Contadora Process**

The Contadora Group was formed in January 1983 by the governments of Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela to advance a process of dialogue and to negotiate a comprehensive peace treaty in Central America. It followed a series of earlier diplomatic efforts to promote negotiations between the governments of El Salvador and the United States, and the FDR-FMLN; of the United States and Nicaragua; and of Honduras and Nicaragua. Among the earlier initiatives were the visit of Archbishop Rivera y Damas of El Salvador to Washington in January 1981 to propose negotiations with the FDR-FMLN; a call to negotiations, together with the recognition in August 1981 of the FDR-FMLN as a "representative political force", by the governments of Mexico and France; the negotiation proposal for both El Salvador and Nicaragua presented by Mexican President Lopez Portillo in February 1982, calling for cease-fires and non-aggression pacts, the demilitarization of Nicaragua and the disbandment of the *contras*; the September 1982 joint letter of Presidents Herrera Campins of Venezuela and Lopez Portillo of Mexico to President Reagan, proposing to mediate between Honduras and Nicaragua.

At its first meeting of 7-8 January 1983, the Contadora Group called for talks between the government and the rebels in El Salvador, the withdrawal of foreign military advisors from Central America and an end to arms imports to the region from foreign countries. Later, in September 1983, the Contadora Group presented a twenty-one point proposal as the basis for peace and this was signed by all five Central American nations. The United States also subscribed to the proposal in principle.

During the following year, the Contadora Group, with the participation of over one hundred technical advisors and diplomats, elaborated a peace proposal which involved calling a halt to both Nicaragua's and El Salvador's arms buildups; the termination of external support for the insurgents fighting against both governments; the withdrawal of Cuban and Soviet military advisors from Nicaragua and United States advisors from El Salvador; the termination of military exercises and the closing down of foreign military bases; freedom of movement for a verification commission; the holding of free elections. This treaty was designed to check the growth of Nicaragua's armed forces and also to limit United States military involvement in the region.

The United States initially praised the draft treaty which was endorsed on 7 September 1984. However, when Nicaragua accepted

the treaty on 21 September, the United States persuaded Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras to formulate a set of reservations. These were presented on 19 October. A leaked United States National Security Council document, disclosed in press reports of 6 November, indicated that the American Administration had "effectively blocked" the adoption of the draft treaty.

The September 1984 Contadora treaty had been drafted while relations between the United States and Nicaragua continued to deteriorate and the civil war in El Salvador continued to expand. In April, the United States admitted that it had been mining Nicaragua's harbours. The Sandinista government took the case to the International Court of Justice and, in May, the Court called on the United States to desist in the mining of the harbours; in an interim decision, the Court also stated that the United States should not engage in military activities which threatened Nicaragua's sovereignty and political independence. In September, Secretary of State George Shultz sent a letter to the European foreign ministers and Central American leaders discussing co-operative economic relations between Europe (the European Economic Community, Portugal and Spain) and the region, urging the European ministers not to include Nicaragua in their programmes.

This deterioration in relations continued after Costa Rica, Honduras and El Salvador presented their reservations to the first draft treaty. On 17 January 1985, the United States suspended the bilateral "Manzanillo Talks" with Nicaragua which it had initiated in mid-1984 at the urging of the Contadora nations. On the following day, the United States also withdrew from further proceedings before the International Court of Justice and suspended its recognition of the Court's jurisdiction on matters related to Central America, for two years. Then, on 21 February, President Reagan stated at a news conference that the United States wished to "remove" the "present structure" of the Nicaraguan government and added that the Sandinistas would be acceptable only if "they'd say uncle". While the rhetorical war escalated and the United States rejected various appeals to re-initiate the "Manzanillo Talks", President Reagan announced the imposition of a trade embargo against Nicaragua on 1 May. Relations between the two countries were further strained by Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega's May trip to the Soviet Union as Congress subsequently approved "humanitarian assistance" to the *contras*.

Contadora's efforts to work out a second draft treaty took place in this climate of exacerbated tension and conflict accompanied by a

continuing militarization into which Costa Rica was now being drawn. Border clashes on the Costa Rican-Nicaraguan frontier, and the initiation in May of a programme for United States military personnel to train the country's civil police, polarized political debate, although Costa Rica refused to co-operate with the trade embargo of Nicaragua.

Since the Roundtable discussions, in early December 1985 the Contadora Group announced the suspension of its activities until May 1986. A Contadora foreign minister noted that the suspension was caused by the "deep confrontation" between the United States and Nicaragua. In October, members of the United States National Security Council had toured Central America to lobby against the acceptance of the new treaty. The decision to postpone further negotiations reflected a serious impasse in the Contadora process, but it also allowed for the elections and changes in government which took place in Costa Rica, Guatemala and Honduras in late 1985 – early 1986.

In effect, the Contadora Group met with the Lima Group (Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay) on 11-12 January, and produced the Caraballeda message which reaffirmed the original Contadora principles as a basis for peace in Central America and outlined a plan for immediate action. Subsequently, the Guatemala Declaration, signed on 14 January by the Contadora and Lima Groups as well as the five Central American countries, reaffirmed the Caraballeda message. A month later, on 10 February, the foreign ministers of the Contadora and Lima Groups held their first combined talks in Washington with Secretary of State George Shultz.

4. **Canadian Policy Toward Central America**

Both the former Liberal and current Conservative Governments have reiterated their recognition of United States security concerns in Central America. Moreover, Progressive Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, whose party took power in September 1984, has placed improved United States-Canadian relations at the top of his foreign policy agenda.

At the same time, the Canadian Government has consistently expressed its support for diplomatic negotiations and its concern about the militarization of the region. Furthermore, Canadian government officials have stressed the indigenous social, economic and political sources of the current regional crisis. Canadian support for negotiations is consistent with its traditional support for international organizations and peacekeeping missions sponsored

by the United Nations. In statements concerning Central America, officials have emphasized Canada's concern about the rule of law and its importance in international relations.

Canada has also provided support for the regional negotiations efforts led by the Contadora Group. The office of the Secretary of State for External Affairs (SSEA) noted in *Competitiveness and Security: Directions for Canada's International Relations* (May 1985): "We believe the Contadora process offers the best hope for a peaceful end to the conflict in Central America." In his address to the United Nations on 25 September 1984, Secretary of State Joe Clark stated: "Canada regrets the extension to Central America of East-West confrontation and the related militarization of the area. We applaud the initiative, skill and tenacity of the Contadora countries in their efforts to build a framework of reconciliation in the spirit of the United Nations Charter. We also welcome the opening of a direct dialogue between the USA and Nicaragua".

Moreover, the government has indicated its willingness to play a direct role in promoting peace and Mr. Clark has stated that Canada intends to play a major role in reducing tensions in Central America (*Globe and Mail*, 24 November 1984). This refers not only to Canada's willingness to support the development process through aid, but also to the government's provision of technical advice on verification and control mechanisms for the draft treaty being advanced by Contadora.

As far as development is concerned, the Canadian Government is committed to providing continued economic aid to the region. However, Canada's overall capacity to provide assistance is being threatened by fiscal restraint policies. As a result of recent and proposed budgetary changes, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) faces a situation whereby, over the six year period 1984-1990, nearly $2.5 billion of aid funds have been cut or diverted, from programmes benefitting the poorest, to programmes whose primary objective is the provision of export subsidies for Canadian firms.

Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua have been the major Central American aid recipients during the past several years. Honduras is a CIDA programme country – that is, eligible for sustained aid. In November 1981, Canada suspended new bilateral aid to both Guatemala and El Salvador because of gross and systematic violations of human rights and the lack of security for aid officials in the field. In the light of the election of Duarte to the presidency, the

Conservative Government restored aid to El Salvador at an initial level of $8 million. Bilateral aid was initiated to assist the reconstruction effort in Nicaragua and to alleviate the economic crisis in Costa Rica. Aid programmes in the two countries have been continued by the Conservative Government. Shortly after taking office, the Mulroney Government approved $7.5 million for a potable water project for Nicaragua and $11.1 million was approved in early 1985 for the Momotombo geothermic project. Bilateral aid to Central America disbursed over the five-year period 1980-81 to 1984-85 totalled 15.2 million for Costa Rica, 10.3 for El Salvador, 29.2 for Honduras, 5.3 for Guatemala and 9.5 for Nicaragua. CIDA also provides matching funds for a broad range of Canadian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which support projects in all the Central American Countries.

In the multilateral funding agencies (Inter-American Development Bank [IADB], World Bank, International Monetary Fund) Canada has consistently argued for the maintenance of technical criteria in project assessment and approval. At the 1985 meeting of the IADB, the Canadian delegate, Gerald Weiner, M.P. (then Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs) challenged attempts to politicize the Bank. Canada has also been a generous donor to the Central American programmes of both the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (CRC).

With regard to diplomatic representation, there are two Canadian embassies with resident ambassadors in Central America – one, in San José, Costa Rica, which is also responsible for Nicaragua and El Salvador; the other, in Guatemala City, Guatemala, which covers Honduras as well. Consideration has been given to establishing a diplomatic presence in Nicaragua. Canada has also maintained full diplomatic relations with Cuba, its fourth most important trading partner in Latin America, after Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela.

Although not a member of the Organization of American States (OAS), Canada has held Permanent Observer status since 1972. The question of full membership has occasionally attracted public attention and generated political debate but there is no consensus on the question. Canada is not a member of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty) but the Canadian Department of National Defence does participate as an observer at meetings of the Conference of American Armies.

Concern for human rights has been an important factor in Cana-

dian foreign policy toward Latin America in general. While not a member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Canada has been very active as a member of the United States Commission on Human Rights. A leading supporter of initiatives of a general nature on torture, religious liberty and disappeared persons, Canada has also taken part in drafting resolutions on specific countries, including Guatemala and El Salvador. In addition, Canada has a policy of not allowing the export of military or strategic goods and technology to "(a) countries considered to represent a military threat to Canada; (b) countries involved in or under imminent threat of hostilities; (c) countries to which United Nations resolutions forbid the export of arms; and (d) regimes considered to be wholly repugnant to Canadian values." In this respect, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Clark, has stated: "The Canadian Government is not in favour of any third party intervention in Central America . . . Canada does not approve of the supply of armaments by any country to opposing factions in Central America" (letter, 14 June 1985).

Since the significant response to the needs of Chilean refugees in 1973 and the years following, the Canadian Government has had an active refugee-immigration presence in South and Central America. While visa requirements for visitors from Guatemala have been an obstacle, significant movements of refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala have occurred. In addition, drawing upon its experience in Chile and Argentina, the Government undertook a special programme for political detainees in El Salvador.

Canadian policy toward Latin America has been influenced by an active and informed constituency, concerned with issues in the region, which has developed over the last 10-15 years. It includes business (Canadian Association for Latin America and the Caribbean, f. 1969), labour (increased activity by the Canadian Labour Congress) as well as various unions and federations, the churches (Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and others), academics (Canadian Association for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, f. 1969), and numerous non-governmental organizations active in international development (Canadian Catholic Organization of Development and Peace, Cansave, Care Canada, Horizons for Friendship, Inter-Pares, Oxfam Canada, and others). In 1982-1983, there were some 50 Canadian-based agencies involved in over 800 projects throughout Latin America. Immigrants of Hispanic origin also have recently founded a national organization (Canadian Hispanic Congress).

II.

ROUNDTABLE PROCEEDINGS

> Let us move by ourselves, without external justification, to resolve our own family quarrels: Latin America is not at war with the United States, it is at war with itself.
>
> Carlos Fuentes[1]

1. Session I. Creating Conditions for De-escalation and Opportunities for Pursuing a Peace Agreement

The situation

The danger of continued military escalation and border conflicts leading to outside intervention and regional war is increasing, despite the efforts of Contadora to promote negotiations leading to a general agreement which would guarantee long-term peace and economic development in the region.

Questions addressed

1. What accounts for the success that Contadora has had and what accounts for its failures and shortcomings?
2. What are the conditions for success which have been, or are now, lacking?
3. At the present moment, what are the most critical points of conflict and the principal areas of disagreement, and can Contadora alone deal effectively with them?
4. What types of bilateral and/or multilateral initiatives could in the short term de-escalate conflicts, and in the long term both strengthen Contadora and create conditions for the negotiation of a peace agreement?
5. What are the specific regional and international de-escalation and confidence building measures that would help create conditions for general negotiations?

DISCUSSION

The Contadora group has failed to achieve a comprehensive peace agreement. Nevertheless, most Roundtable participants agreed

[1] Carlos Fuentes, *Latin America at War With the Past*, p. 55

that it has played an important role in "lowering temperature" and preventing a regional war in Central America. Moreover, it was noted that direct US military intervention might have taken place if it were not for the process of continuing negotiations established by the Contadora nations. Thus political will oriented toward diplomacy has been generated. International attention has also been focused on a broad range of key issues related to the region's crisis, including the resolution of severe refugee, human rights and economic problems. Contadora's successes in these areas have been significantly aided by the support and encouragement it has received from Western European nations and Canada, as well as from sectors of the US public. That support has been forthcoming precisely because the process represents a genuinely Latin American effort to resolve a complex regional crisis. As one participant noted, "Contadora's composition is its strength", while another remarked that it originates "among the friends of the United States".

But the fact remains that, after almost three years of effort, a comprehensive peace agreement remains as elusive as ever while the militarization of the region continues. A number of participants explained this by referring to the complexity and multiplicity of issues involved: armed conflicts in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala; serious inter-state tensions between Nicaragua and its neighbours, between El Salvador and Honduras, and to a lesser extent between El Salvador and Guatemala, as well as between Guatemala and Belize; the penetration of these conflicts by East-West rivalry, primarily manifested in the deterioration of United States-Nicaraguan relations since 1980; human rights and refugee problems as well as other issues.

The diversity of interests among the four Contadora countries and the five Central American nations involved was also underlined. The Contadora countries are not united in objectives among themselves while the process serves different purposes in their internal politics. Moreover, all the countries involved suffer from economic weakness – notably, high levels of indebtedness – while their links with the United States are deep and complex. These latter factors have political implications which may deter independent action. In addition, one Latin American participant in particular stressed that the Contadora Four lacked experience and expertise in peace negotiations and conflict resolution.

Finally, various participants from Latin America noted that Contadora was made possible by the Malvinas War and "the anti-

imperialism it generated"; Malvinas created a diplomatic vacuum and brought out the need for a peacekeeping forum in Latin America. But precisely because of this, Contadora is perceived as anti-American and this represents yet another weakness.

While all participants recognized these problems, they also agreed that the state of United States-Nicaraguan relations was a major obstacle to any advance in negotiations. The United States argues that the Nicaraguan Sandinista Revolution has not fulfilled its promises of promoting democratic pluralism, respecting human rights and maintaining a non-aligned foreign policy. The Sandinistas are perceived in Washington as "ideologically and politically" aligned with the Soviet Bloc, regardless of the overall diversity of their trading relationships. They are also accused of providing support and arms to the Salvadorean revolutionary movement. Thus the United States Government supports the *contras*, considering them a legitimate opposition force, and demands their recognition by the Sandinistas. What most concerns the United States, an American participant argued, is "the increasing authoritarianism" of the Sandinistas and the lack of "real non-alignment". "Some *contras* do represent liberal democratic groups and have to be taken more seriously". "Nicaragua should meet on better terms with its opposition. *The contras* are a parallel to the left in El Salvador." It was also argued that if "real non-alignment" were pursued and "some domestic policies were changed", the United States would cut off its assistance to the *contras*.

The United States position and the policies based on it were challenged by various participants from Latin America and Canada. It was argued that the *contras* would not be able to sustain themselves without US aid: there is a "difference between an indigenous revolutionary movement and armed groups planted on borders" and consequently the *contras* and the Salvadorean FMLN cannot be compared. As for the issues of respect for human rights and political pluralism, the Nicaraguan Government has made significant advances – there are seven parties in its Congress – especially in view of the war being waged against it. Nicaragua has also been visited by numerous prestigious human rights organizations and they have concluded that "in comparative perspective, human rights violations in Nicaragua are insignificant." "Fundamental violations", noted a Canadian Parliamentarian, "should be distinguished from minor offenses." He also warned against the use of "double standards" in judging Nicaragua's performance – "what government has ever kept its promises?"; moreover, "we should recall that civil liberties were seriously restricted in Canada during

World War II" as they were during the 1970 October Crisis in Quebec. "What would happen to civil liberties in Canada and the United States if they faced the equivalent of the *contras* on their borders?"

On the question of non-alignment, a participant from Central America argued that "the presence of seven parties in the government serves as a basis for non-alignment", and that the United States is creating a "self-fulfilling prophecy" – in this sense, acting "as the best ally of the Soviet Union" – by formulating its policies toward the region within an East-West perspective. The real issue, he suggested, was the willingness of the United States to accept the right to self-determination by small nations in its hemispheric sphere of influence. Other participants pointed out that the United States had violated both its own laws and international law in its actions against Nicaragua, and that no proof of Nicaraguan arms supplies to the Salvadorean FMLN had been forthcoming. Finally, the question was raised of whether it was possible to make any progress toward resolving these issues in view of severe tensions in the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the increasing militarization of the region threatened to close off room for manoeuvre and weaken those civilian political forces committed to peaceful negotiation of conflicts.

An American participant was asked to explain what the United States wanted as an ideal in Nicaragua. The response was, the fall of the government and its replacement by a pluralist regime. But would that not induce greater instability and spread armed conflict in the region, he was asked. "That would depend on how the Sandinistas leave power," he replied. If they did so as a consequence of "a regional process or an uprising against Nicaragua by other Central American countries, the reaction would not be as negative" as it would be if their departure was due to direct United States intervention. "If it were the result of the actions of the internal opposition" or through "internal transformation, the reaction would be even more positive and violence would decrease all around." Other participants questioned whether democracy or pluralism would result from the fall of the Sandinistas, especially in view of the fact that the United States was supporting non-democratic trends in Costa Rica and fuelling the militarization of the region as a whole. They further argued that the overthrow of the Sandinistas would cause de-stabilization in the sub-continent as a whole and, indeed, all over Latin America.

Since the United States-Nicaraguan conflict is the focus for many

other critical points of disagreement, it was generally agreed that efforts to de-escalate it should be promoted. To achieve this, rhetoric will have to be toned down, and concessions by both parties will be required. But the United States, various participants argued, must reciprocate; Nicaragua must not be asked to concede more than the United States. Among the suggestions which emerged in the course of the discussion were: the resumption of the Manzanillo talks as a process of dialogue and negotiation complementary to Contadora's efforts; the organization of a consortium of nations – Western Europe, Canada and Japan – to provide economic aid to Nicaragua, especially for obtaining petroleum from Mexico and Venezuela, in order to reduce its reliance on the Soviet Union and to defuse the East-West polarization taking place; the assumption of greater responsibilities by Canada and Western Europe in persuading the United States to adopt a more conciliatory and flexible attitude toward Nicaragua. One European participant noted that the allies of the United States should "not hide behind Contadora" but should "send clearer warnings to the United States."

Beyond the specific issue of United States-Nicaragua relations, it was agreed that the Contadora process needs to be fortified – "there is nothing to replace it." Greater political will and support is required internationally – in Latin America, Europe and Canada. The United Nations could also take on greater responsibilities and play more of a role if it were requested to do so by the Central American nations. While international support, political will and courage are essential, technical issues must also be resolved. The Canadian Government is providing advice on verification and control mechanisms for the new draft treaty, but a reliable political authority which is acceptable to all parties is also required for the implementation of a treaty. Changes in the composition of Contadora were also debated, with several participants variously arguing the need to introduce "disinterested parties" or countries like Canada into the process. How the United States should relate to the process remains problematic. At present, the United States is not involved in the negotiations, "but it effectively exercises veto power on them."

The importance of a "workable" treaty was underlined by various participants, and some questioned Contadora's capacity to provide it. The "first draft", argued one Canadian, "would have been 'cosmetic'" because an entire range of technical issues had not been worked out. Canada will have to see the text of Contadora II (that is the September 1985 draft) to decide whether or not it merits support. "Canada cannot sign a blank cheque." A Latin American

thought that Contadora had "tried to tackle too many issues in a single package." Others pointed out that the United States was behind El Salvador's, Honduras' and Costa Rica's objections to the agreement, that Nicaragua saw the objections simply as excuses for not signing the treaty and that technical issues can always be resolved if the political will to do so exists.

One of the major suggestions emerging from the discussion was the strengthening of Contadora through its institutionalization. A secretariat, to channel communications and expertise into the negotiation process, could be established with financial support from Canada and other countries. The organization of a "Friends of Contadora", as a complement to the Lima Group to provide assistance and support, might also be considered. In addition to bilateral and multilateral governmental initiatives, it was argued that constructive international public support for the negotiations is extremely important, and that a broad variety of non-governmental organizations – ranging from churches to labour unions – could play a role in creating a climate propitious for such negotiations.

Priorities have to be established, and it was clear that measures which respond to the immediate political conflicts must be formulated first; nevertheless, medium- and long-term issues will also have to be addressed. In this respect, various participants emphasized that the Central American crisis must be viewed in historical perspective as a crisis of the region's development model – distributional issues are at the source of the conflicts and therefore social and economic reforms are necessary to guarantee long-term stability in the region. Economic growth must also be promoted and regional trade reactivated. As one of the Canadian non-governmental participants reiterated: "development and security are two faces of the same coin." Canada and the European Community, it was suggested, should co-operate in increasing development aid designed to address the region's structural and distributional problems.

Broader questions concerning the nature of revolutionary single-party states and the role of ethics and law in international relations also generated lively debate. Revolutionary states such as Algeria and Zimbabwe, it was pointed out, do not have to become security threats to the Western alliance. Respect for their right to self-determination, in accord with international law, must be forcefully defended. Middle powers have a special stake in promoting respect for international law. Thus, while the interests of nations obviously

have to be dealt with, ethics must not be abandoned for *realpolitik*. In this respect, a Canadian member of the academic community proposed, "Canada and others should offer something like a blank cheque to Contadora. We have to act as if Contadora were a success in order to make it succeed."

2. **Session II. Possible Third Party and Multilateral Roles and Initiatives for Nations Not Involved in Contadora or in the Conflicts.**

The situation

A number of diplomatic initiatives in support of Contadora and peace negotiations have been taken, but the situation continues to deteriorate.

Questions addressed

1. What have been the most effective third party initiatives taken up to date and what did they accomplish?
2. What were the regional and international conditions which facilitated those initiatives being taken?
3. What accounted for their relative effectiveness?
4. Why were they not successful in halting escalation?
5. What are the immediate benefits of de-escalation for the nations involved in the conflicts?
6. How could third parties encourage greater flexibility on the part of the nations involved in the conflicts – what incentives for negotiated settlements can be developed?

DISCUSSION

Third party bilateral and multilateral support for peace negotiations in Central America, with few exceptions, has been "sporadic"; it has been forthcoming in moments of crisis. Sustained rather than sporadic support is essential for strengthening diplomacy and Contadora. In this respect, the September 1984 San José meetings, organized by the European Economic Community (EEC) in Costa Rica to program aid for the region, stand out as a significant initiative, especially since it was taken by major United States trading partners and allies. It was suggested that Canada, in view of its substantial bilateral aid programmes in Central America, should be represented at the November follow-up in Luxembourg.

The discussion of the failure of third parties to advance diplomatic solutions led to an examination of the United States' interpretation

of its security interests in the region. A Latin American observed that there is "virtue in the blunt frankness" with which they have been stated. However, while all participants recognized legitimate United States security interests, the violations of international law and "even of its own laws" through acts such as the mining of Nicaraguan harbours were condemned. The United States, in this sense, is an "outlaw", declared a member of the Canadian academic community. Moreover, an "irrational element" was also noted in its approach to the Central American crisis, and Nicaragua in particular.

"Negotiations face a chicken and egg problem: who disarms first; the *contras* or the Nicaraguan government? By all rational criteria, the risks for the United States are minimal and for Nicaragua enormous", observed a Canadian University professor. Another participant identified the legitimate United States security interests, consisting of guaranteed freedom of movement through the Panama Canal, assurance of there being no regimes hostile to the United States in the area, and the establishment of peace and stability to resolve refugee and illegal immigration problems. However one identified legitimate United States security interests, there was a general consensus that the United States could assure its security without "imposing hegemony".

"How can the United States be induced to redefine its security objectives in a non-hegemonic manner?" Various responses emerged in the course of the session. Several participants emphasized the importance of having United States allies send clear and forceful messages to Washington, thus providing support to groups critical of current policies, especially in Congress, and obtaining access to the media to present alternative positions. Other participants singled out the dangers and costs of military escalation. A United States invasion would provoke "anti-Americanism and a general breakdown of democracy all over Latin America"; it would lead to increased guerrilla warfare in Central America, a loss of credibility in NATO and a "decisive polarization" of an already overly polarized international system. The public had to be educated on these dangers. Finally, a Central American participant commented that the United States must be convinced that "it needs allies rather than satellites." In response to these arguments, a participant from the United States urged "even-handed criticism." While the United States may have violated territorial sovereignty, he argued that Nicaragua had done likewise – "That is why the Carter Administration cut off aid. Canada and Europe should not

be one-sided, and pressure should be applied to all countries that violate OAS agreements."

Apart from this question of how to influence the United States to adopt more flexible policies toward Central America, the Roundtable participants generally agreed that bilateral and multilateral initiatives to advance negotiations must be aimed at strengthening or complementing the Contadora process. The importance of political will was stressed once more; "technical advice is needed and should be provided but no one should hide behind technical issues."

The question of Latin American, in contrast to non-Latin American, roles and initiatives was debated at length. Several participants from the region stressed that Latin America must take a common stand on political and diplomatic solutions and accept responsibility for assuring their implementation; non-Latin participation would be welcomed if it was clearly directed to fortifying the Contadora process; it would be especially welcome in dealing with obstacles and forces external to the region. However, the lack of a permanent political forum and therefore the need for a new Latin American institution "with legitimacy and credibility" were also noted: the Organization of American States (OAS) is no longer adequate to the task; during the Malvinas war, the Sistema Economico Latinoamericano (SELA) created an action committee for co-ordination. Contadora, in this respect, represents a "growing consensus" and "has achieved a new sense of legality"; the formation of the Lima Group is another step toward "the resolution of Latin America's problems by Latin Americans." In any case, no initiative should compete with Contadora.

Other participants suggested that Contadora's purely Latin American composition may also be its weakness to the extent that it tends to be perceived as anti-American. They argued for the inclusion of the United States at the "bargaining table." "Canada and European countries could be brought in as well; then all the interests can be discussed directly and openly. The United States can now negotiate only bilaterally." "How is the United States to be included? The United States has to be there. As much as the Latins may want it, it will not go away." In view of this, it might be worth examining past agreements in the region. It was argued that the resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis could provide a "guideline" since it had been complied with and represented the Soviet position of "not wanting to shake the basket." Furthermore, a Camp David approach could be considered, including the creation of de-militarized zones.

While the appropriate composition of Contadora and suitable models for negotiations elicited a diversity of opinions, Roundtable participants generally agreed on the need for economic recovery and co-operation among the Central American states, as well as the region's urgent need for economic assistance and the "diversification of its dependency." The acuteness of the Central American economic crisis was repeatedly underlined and its resolution was considered basic for long-term peace and stability. Canadians and Europeans were urged to provide technical, commercial and financial assistance, especially with reference to the management and negotiations of the external debt, and to encourage the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the United Nations "to take a lead in directing economic aid to the Central American countries."

Such assistance would ease the tasks confronting Contadora and also could lower the United States profile in the Caribbean in general. In addition to economic aid, various diplomatic and other initiatives for Canadians and Europeans were proposed, including: the appointment of roving ambassadors; the up-grading of diplomatic representation through the opening of new embassies, particularly in Managua; the formulation and implementation of autonomous policies based on independent information sources; a willingness to take diplomatic risks in peace promotion; the establishment of a multilateral surveillance and monitoring unit to investigate and report on arms trafficking; encouragement for the United States to present evidence at the World Court so that its position can be properly evaluated; research by institutions such as the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security (CIIPS) on the conflicts in Central America and Contadora, and alternative approaches to resolving these conflicts.

The importance of institutionalizing Contadora and establishing a secretariat to draw in expertise from outside Latin America, as suggested in the earlier session, was reiterated by various participants and drew some criticism. A US participant objected that Contadora began as a "modest attempt" and too much was now expected of it. "Would the Central American countries want to have a permanent bureaucracy? Would the Contadora Four want it?" Moreover, he argued, third parties can do little to enhance the process since they "lack knowledge and experience of the historical animosities in the region." Rather, third parties could achieve most by providing economic aid, accepting refugees and "encouraging reconciliation so that armed groups could be removed from neighbouring countries and allowed to return home." Otherwise, third

parties "will just be asked to foot the bill and provide troops." In contrast, other participants emphasized the need to maintain flexibility and to develop an "immediate reaction capacity" for Contadora, should a secretariat be established. Resources would also be required for the appropriate organization of such a secretariat.

At various points in the discussion, questions concerning the relationship between interest, ethics and international law were raised once more. A specialist in the area of international relations argued that third parties and middle powers must recognize that their interests are not linked to geo-politics. "Their interest is to live in a state of peace – in a world of law." Justifying actions by arguing that other nations do not respect international law, he stated, contributes to "lawlessness."

3. **Session III. Requirements for the Effective Implementation of the De-escalation Measures and of a Regional Peace Accord**

The Situation

Firm and clearly defined commitments are required on the part of third parties acting bilaterally and/or multilaterally in order to reduce current tensions and provide support for the future implementation of a peace accord.

The Questions Addressed

1. What resources (political, diplomatic and economic) are required for the effective implementation of de-escalation measures and peace agreements?
2. From where could these resources be drawn?
3. What roles could non-governmental organizations play?
4. What should be the ultimate political authority for the peace process? And what would be the characteristics of the body or bodies responsible for both the administration and supervision of immediate de-escalation measures and later peace agreements.
5. What verification procedures are essential for the implementation of de-escalation measures and peace agreements?

DISCUSSION

The session began with an overview of the most significant obstacles to peace in the region, presented by two of the Central American participants. They argued that these derived essentially

from the region's dependency on and closeness to the United States: "There is no peace because there is no social justice; there is no social justice because United States policy has permitted local oligarchies to retain power." The current conflicts "stem from a skewed distribution of income and power." The Central American states have exercised "permanent violence against their citizens." It should be recalled that the contemporary revolutionary movements were "moderate in their origins"; that the repression and violence today affects a broad political spectrum and has prevented the organization of modern party systems. "The United States has played a role in all of this, delaying necessary social development" and the transformation of economic and political structures. The United States also exaggerates security issues and has interjected East-West problems into the conflicts. Nevertheless, the United States must agree to any peace agreement for it to be viable.

As in the previous sessions, it was agreed that diplomatic initiatives in support of a peace process must be taken. In addition, however, economic resources must be obtained – not only to support the appropriate functioning of the control and verification commissions which are necessary for the implementation of any treaty, but also to address the region's economic and social crisis which is at the root of its political conflicts.

To provide a diagnosis of the economic crisis in the region, a participant from Central America pointed out that the Common Market is a "shambles"; commodity prices are down by 50 percent; the region has the highest per capita external debt in Latin America; coffee, banana and sugar exports – the "dessert economy" – have no future; and to top it all, the region competes with the Caribbean in this type of production. Consequently, he argued that no national solutions are possible and that regional programmes which include the Caribbean and greater integration with Latin America must be developed. "An Economic Contadora is needed." Dependency can begin to be diversified by creating a mini-New International Economic Order (NIEO) among the Latin American countries and "smaller non-imperialist nations." The Central American and Caribbean nations are rich in potential seabed and petroleum resources, for example, and could become self-sufficient in the production of basic grains within five years. Grains could even be bartered for Mexican petroleum. The organization of a mini-NIEO, he argued, could be started now and it could play an important role in furthering co-operation and thereby advancing peace proposals: the promotion of "growth without equity is the formula for instability." With reference to Contadora, priority

lies in "preventing the worst from happening" – namely, the outbreak of war between the United States and Nicaragua, and between Nicaragua and its neighbours.

Another participant, addressing the question of priorities, asked: "should an overall agreement be negotiated first or should the fighting be stopped first?" He argued that a cease-fire is a precondition to a general peace agreement and that the "imperial attitude" of the United States is the central problem. To deal with this, the Central American countries will also have to identify their own responsibilities.

The diplomatic initiatives that Canada might take and the resources it could provide to address these problems were discussed. It was suggested that Canada, which was perceived as a friend by the Central American nations and was also a good neighbour of the United States, could influence the two key parties to the conflict – the United States and Nicaragua – through diplomatic channels. Suggestions could be made which would allow both parties to disengage without "losing face." A conference with the non-Somocista Nicaraguan opposition could be a step in this direction.

Together with other nations, such as Sweden, Canada should also "intensify" its support for Contadora and be prepared to step into the breach with positive diplomatic initiatives if Contadora II failed. Canada could also play a role in raising the awareness of the international community concerning Central American issues. It had already made an impact on the South African conflict and could take similar steps regarding Central America, such as promoting the holding of a special session of the United Nations. Finally, it was argued that both government and non-governmental organizations must speak out against the militarization of the region and the "culture of violence" that it creates; even private United States vigilante groups were funnelling weapons to the area. How could this be given broader publicity and stopped?

With reference to economic aid, a Central American asked how the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) analyzes development issues, specifically the problem of economic development models which produce capital outflow and create social injustice. In designing economic aid programmes, due consideration should be given to reversing such situations. Redistributive measures, such as land reform, should be encouraged through aid, and support provided for non-governmental organizations that encourage grass-roots participation to secure "justice and respect for human rights."

The need for Canadian technical aid and expertise in peacekeeping was reiterated and two Canadian participants reviewed the issues of control and verification mechanisms, and the political authority required for the implementation of a peace treaty. Substantial resources would be required to support a supervising authority, the establishment of a communications system and a control and verification institution. "Peacekeeping is not cheap." National joint commissions should also be established in each country. These would facilitate the work of the international body in charge of security measures and ensure the continuation of this work if the international body withdrew. Resources might be provided by a combination of the United Nations, the Organization of American States, regional institutions and third parties. Financing by a single country must be avoided since it would simply not be sufficient. Likewise, voluntary agreements should be avoided for financing would have to be guaranteed.

The members of a control and verification commission would need to be acceptable to and respected by all parties, and would have to be perceived as impartial since the commission would not be able to employ force to implement its decisions; it would rely on moral suasion. One of the tasks in Central America would be de-militarization. This would be difficult, since the size of the peacekeeping force which would be required, given the proximity of numerous borders, could not be afforded. Therefore the issue was the creation of a control and verification commission only. The commission would require qualified experts and would have to be able to react quickly to requests for investigation; verify everything the parties agreed to; check on military movements and the presence of military advisors and examine inventories to track small arms. Verification procedures involve assessing, inspecting and reporting; this, in turn, implies freedom of access, movement and expression.

While the responsibility for creating a commission may be assumed by third parties, its organization should be realized by the signatory countries. It should also be recognized that insurgent movements which do not respect the commission could create problems and become a threat to it, since the commission will have no mandate to deal with internal problems.

An organization of international status was required as the ultimate political authority and it was up to the Central American and Contadora countries to make the decision concerning this. Since such an authority would have to implement de-escalation measures, it must be accepted by all parties and have the capacity to

enforce its decisions. The authority should therefore be clearly impartial and interested in promoting peace, and it would need to have a precise and limited mandate.

In the discussion which followed, a Central American participant noted that the Salvadorean rebels (the FMLN) would be politically sensitive to the needs of a verification and control commission and therefore would not present a threat to it. Another agreed with this but argued further that the potential problem lay with the 12,000-15,000 *contras* on the Nicaraguan-Honduran border: "the *contras* will have to be bound by any agreement and this implies some kind of accommodation between the United States and Nicaragua." It was also noted that Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega had suggested that a commission be established at both its borders. While the Nicaraguan-Honduran border would be difficult to control, observed a representative of a non-governmental research institution, the Costa Rican-Nicaraguan border could be controlled with 150-200 persons. Although no studies have been done in Canada, the International Peace Academy (IPA) has researched the problem. As far as political authority was concerned, a Latin American argued that a Contadora peace settlement should also be backed by a new continental organization that included Cuba and Canada – "it is time to dismantle the Organization of American States." Regarding "peacekeeping forces", it was observed that they are "tabu" in Latin America; even a control commission should be small in size. Finally, it was noted that, with the exception of institutions such as the IPA, non-governmental organizations could not play much of a role in the implementation of control and verification. Non-governmental organizations could, however, effectively perform a variety of other roles in promoting peace in the region. Among those identified by the participants were to try to influence their counterparts in the United States and to emphasize to all sides in the conflict the need for honest communication – "what is technically 'true' may be difficult to determine but, at least, lies can be avoided."

A Canadian singled out the importance and influence of the trade union movement in Latin America and elsewhere. The Central American labour movement supports Contadora and it is an important vehicle for correcting economic injustice and thereby laying the bases for sustained peace. The Central American trade unions have also sought the co-operation of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) to lobby against political repression in the region. A Central American agreed that the basis for democratization is the development of all types of popular organizations – unions, profes-

sional associations and the like. These organizations can promote respect for human rights, and the initiatives of their counter-parts in Canada should receive support from the government. "The desire for peace – to end inter-state conflicts – should not overshadow vigilance on human rights." "Contadora is intended to stop border wars and should not be interpreted as a way of freezing the current order", added another Roundtable member.

During the course of the discussion, issues related to developments in specific countries – notably El Salvador and Honduras – were also addressed. Peace in the region, it was emphasized, involves more than putting an end to conflicts on borders.

One can be led to believe that the Contadora process involves only United States-Nicaraguan relations, observed a Central American, especially when Washington portrays the election of José Napoléon Duarte to the presidency in El Salvador as an example of democracy at work. In fact, however, the civil war there continues. Even if the United States were to support the regional negotiations, successful negotiations in El Salvador would not necessarily be guaranteed. When Duarte was elected, the FMLN forces were asked to lay down their arms. But if they were to do so, or if they surrendered, would that ensure progress toward political and economic democracy for El Salvador? People "seem to have forgotten why the war began." Its cause was the skewed distribution of income and political power and that is still present in El Salvador. The Duarte government either chooses to ignore these problems or lacks the capacity to address them. Actions must be taken to promote dialogue; perhaps third parties could first offer help with the solution of specific problems at the local level and then later extend their initiatives to the national level. The problem is that third parties relate to governments and not to the forces opposed to them, forces which may be very significant. Aid is offered to governments and not to opposition forces. "How can you get around this problem?" This participant also remarked that, in the course of the discussion, it had been suggested that El Salvador would negotiate with its rebels if Nicaragua did the same; that El Salvador would make concessions if Nicaragua made them. This view, he argued, ignores the nature of the political conflict in each country. Moreover, there are two armies inside El Salvador; the FMLN has proven itself more efficient but there are 60,000 men in the Salvadorean military. Do both forces have the will to negotiate?

Regarding the parallels between El Salvador and Nicaragua, "international negotiations can only take place between legally

recognized parties", added another participant from Central America. As far as the *contras* are concerned, they are "an artificial group whose political union was created in Washington." Moreover, there are amnesties for them which make their return possible and the conflicts in the Atlantic zone are being resolved. Domestic negotiations will have to be put in the context of regional negotiations. Nicaragua, he concluded, will not begin negotiating with the *contras* unless there is political will to reach a regional settlement.

With reference to Honduras, a Central American pointed out that it is the most important country from the geopolitical point of view since it shares borders with three states. What Honduras requires is the renewal of social reforms and the withdrawal of foreign military forces, he argued. The problems of poverty and of the recovery of national dignity have been neglected and all electoral parties are now putting an emphasis on these issues. They are campaigning without recourse to anti-Communist or anti-Sandinista rhetoric, and this is a positive action for peace. Bilateral talks between Honduras and Nicaragua are also being proposed. These would be complementary to Contadora.

However, he continued, the "key problem in Honduras is the presence of the *contras* – their presence means violence, rape, human rights violations, etcetera, at the border. Their presence limits the freedoms of Honduran citizens." Moreover, there is the problem of border incidents which are either publicized or not reported at all, according to the requirements of propaganda. Although such incidents have been reduced on the Honduran border, they have increased on the Costa Rican border. (Various participants had stressed that Costa Rican neutrality must be maintained.) This Roundtable participant went on to suggest that the *contras* should be disarmed and resettled in third countries. The Honduran military would be favourably disposed toward this as well as to the demilitarization of the border.

The interests of Honduras have not been considered by the United States. As it has set up its military bases in the country, Honduras has not received compensating economic aid.

The latter has problems also with El Salvador; border demarcation issues have not been resolved. At the same time, the Salvadorean military has grown to double the strength of Honduras', while El Salvador and Nicaragua are equals in military power. Whoever wins the elections will have to review issues of political and military

relations with the United States as well as issues of economic security. Canadian and European aid could be critical for solving the outstanding problems, and institutions such as the Central American Bank could channel multilateral aid.

With reference to Nicaragua, a representative of an independent Latin American research centre drew attention to the "attempt by the United States to liquidate the Sandinista government." Contadora, he argued, must try to resolve the conflict between the two "without demanding more of Nicaragua than of the United States." The Nicaraguan elections, it must be recognized, had no precedent in the history of revolutions. As to a comparison, made by another participant, of United States and Cuban activities in the region, he stated that the Cuban technical and military advisors in Nicaragua could hardly be compared with United States military aid to El Salvador, its bases in Honduras or its role in the militarization of Costa Rica. "It is a question of proportions." A Canadian participant reiterated the importance of organizing a consortium to provide oil for Nicaragua, and a Central American expressed the need for the demilitarization of the country.

Various participants again underlined the complexity of the crisis in Central America and the significance of Contadora. Three types of conflicts are taking place in the region: internal, intra-regional and extra-regional. It is a region of "stable conflict" which perpetuates itself. Border problems, for example, date back a hundred and fifty years. Therefore peace cannot be conceived of as an "event" but as a "process" which must be sustained. In addition all national interests must be considered legitimate as long as they are formulated in a way which involves no threat to other countries' interests. Sovereignty must be respected.

The "peace process", it was generally agreed, must be carried forward by Contadora. It is a "first" in Latin American history and has "an existence of its own; it is not just the combination of countries forming it". It has its own existence and dynamic, its moral and diplomatic force. Conditions for its technical efficacy must be created. Finally, support for Contadora was coupled with repeated expressions of concern regarding the need to promote social justice and development as well as respect for human rights.

4. **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The concluding session assessed proposals which had emerged from the preceding discussions. The Roundtable Planning Com-

mittee circulated a summary of the proposals grouped under six headings: (1) Contadora; (2) economic initiatives; (3) Canadian initiatives – multilateral and unilateral; (4) other multilateral and/or unilateral third party roles; (5) non-governmental initiatives; (6) Latin American initiatives. The major recommendations are summarized below:

1. ***Contadora***

Discussion focused on two principal sets of proposals: the institutionalization of Contadora and the formation of a "northern Lima group" or "international friends" to support the peace process. Regarding institutionalization, the creation of both a temporary (one to two years) and more permanent structures was proposed. One participant suggested that a permanent secretariat with a six-person staff should be established in Panama with technical and financial support from Latin America, Europe, Canada and other neutral countries. It would be responsible only to Contadora. Another participant raised a procedural point: the secretariat would have to be "requested, accepted and adopted by Contadora." While the notion of a secretariat was broadly supported, several participants expressed concern that institutionalization could constrain the work of Contadora, creating rigidity when flexibility and a capacity to respond quickly are required. It was finally proposed that at least a mechanism that permits the Contadora countries to communicate regularly with the foreign ministries of other countries should be established.

With regard to a "northern friends of Contadora", it was suggested that Canada should take the initiative to create this. Such a group of nations, similar to the Lima group (comprised of Peru, Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina), could provide diplomatic support and financial assistance to Contadora, yet remain independent of it. Whether or not a formal support group is formed, it was argued that third parties should provide technical and financial support as well as information and consultation. However, it was again stated that political will is essential and third parties must "not raise technical issues to confuse the basic issues." With respect to Contadora's immediate priorities, political problems should be addressed first and economic co-operation second. Third parties could also begin preparing to sign or support Contadora II; a "multilateral offensive" should get underway immediately. "It is essential to keep Contadora moving and to give that impression to outside observers."

It was generally agreed that the composition of Contadora should remain the same although one participant suggested that "perhaps" it should be "de-Mexicanized" to strengthen it. Latin American participants, especially, objected to an earlier proposal concerning the inclusion of the United States in the Contadora negotiations.

Finally, the importance of "grass-roots participation" in support of Contadora was reiterated. The organization of fact finding missions by non-governmental organizations, and obtaining access to media to explain that "Contadora is the only way" were singled out as particularly important.

2. ***Economic Initiatives***

Although it was agreed that the immediate priorities are political and diplomatic, economic alternatives for both the medium and the long term must be formulated. Discussion ranged from global to regional prescriptions. At the global level, the "easing of the external debt", as well as policies oriented toward trade expansion are essential together with the diversification of dependency. At the regional level "collective self-reliance to lessen dependency" was stressed above all. The question is, what can the "northern friends", Central American regional institutions, United Nations agencies, and other institutions do. In this respect, a variety of independent institutions and university research centres should be mobilized and provided with resources to research and formulate proposals concerning economic alternatives for the region. Within Latin America, the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) and the Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO), as well as ECLAC, have a role to play.

With reference to the implementation of economic policy, and also of aid programmes, it was argued that trade unions and popular organizations in general should not only be consulted but also involved. This is essential for assuring greater equity and therefore long term peace and security.

The Canadian Department of External Affairs, it was suggested, could call an international meeting on economic aid to Central America with the cooperation of ECLAC and the Sistema Economico Latinoamericano (SELA). Likewise, in order to encourage Canadian interest in regional economic issues, Central Americans should invite Canadians to participate in their economic fora.

3. *Canadian Initiatives: Multilateral and Bilateral*

The possibility of a Canadian sponsored "northern friends" of Contadora was raised once more. A participant from Europe stated that Europeans pay close attention to Canadian foreign policy, and that Canada is respected and has substantial influence in Europe. But he questioned the usefulness of another "friends of Contadora" group, and suggested that future roundtables and *ad hoc* conferences might be more productive. A Central American participant disagreed and added that Nicaragua would welcome another friends of Contadora group. Both participants agreed that the organization of a Canadian-European "consortium" to provide aid to Nicaragua and other Central American countries in cooperation with Latin America would be a positive step.

Even if a governmental "northern friends" of Contadora is not organized, it was proposed that a non-governmental group could be established. It would report to parliaments and inform the public in a continuous fashion. Whether or not such an institution could create further complications was briefly debated.

As a first step, it was suggested that Canada send a representative or observer to the November meeting of the European Economic Community (EEC) in Luxembourg. In any case, no matter what forms the support provided to Contadora and Central America might take, the United States remained the principal actor in the region and its policies must be addressed. In this connection, pressure must be maintained against the politicization of international financial institutions by the United States. Canada, in addition, could take on an advocacy role in favour of Contadora and Central America in multilateral fora in general, emphasizing in such fora that the peace process involves the region as a whole and not just United States-Nicaraguan relations. (In this respect, a Central American participant noted that the situation of Guatemala had not been discussed in the Roundtable. He observed that the guerrilla movement in the country was gaining strength again, and that Guatemala was in an increasingly weak economic position which made it more susceptible to United States pressure.)

Focusing on supportive initiatives that Canada could take on its own, several participants emphasized the importance of speaking out as frequently as possible on Central American issues, at the United Nations and elsewhere, so as to keep them in the public eye. Along with this, Canada should make its position clear to the United States Department of State. With specific reference to Contadora, in addition to the technical assistance on verification and

control already being provided, Canada was encouraged to provide funding; sign the Contadora protocol; support peacekeeping in general; sponsor research on implementation of aid for social and economic transformation.

The establishment of a Canadian embassy in Managua was considered important. A Canadian participant provided four reasons for taking this initiative. First, he argued that Costa Rica was no longer as neutral as it had been and that embassy personnel there were becoming influenced by the changed political climate. Second, since Canada must necessarily participate in the debate concerning the nature of the Sandinista regime, a mission was required which could monitor developments in the country and gather first-hand information. Third, since Nicaragua is involved in two conflict situations – with *contras* at both its borders – Canada could play a role as an observer in the middle. Fourth, by establishing an embassy in Managua, "Canada would be sending a clear message to Washington that it parts company with United States foreign policy toward Nicaragua." In a similar vein, a roving ambassador or envoy, could be appointed. The person named, it was stressed, should play "a real, rather than a symbolic, role."

Another set of proposals, which were debated, concerned the type of aid provided and whether or not it should be made "conditional on non-aggressive behaviour." One participant supported the Canadian government's current policy of avoiding conditionality in all but the most exceptional situations. Other participants noted that, in any case, Canada should tailor its aid programmes to promote social and economic transformation and sponsor research and consultation toward this end.

4. ***Other Multilateral and Unilateral Third Party Roles***

Attention was drawn to the potential role of the United Nations. It was pointed out that the UN Secretary General had had a lot to do with "launching" the Contadora Group. In fact, Latin America had not taken full advantage of the facilities available to them at the United Nations. There was an assumption on the part of Latin Americans that whatever the United Nations did became an East-West issue. But this was not necessarily the case. For example, Costa Rica could raise the question of locating inspection teams at its Nicaraguan border, in the United Nations; "the United Nations has the best machinery in the field." Interventions could also be made both in the General Assembly and the Security Council. "Europeans and Latin Americans should take greater advantage of this forum to warn their ally, the United States, of their disagree-

ment with its present policy." However, another participant noted, the United States government has generally opposed United Nations involvement in the Central American crisis.

In a similar vein, a Canadian international affairs scholar stressed the importance of the rule of law in relations among nations. Canada should declare its respect for the rule of the International Court of Justice. "Sometimes", he observed, "'silent diplomacy' simply does not work."

With specific reference to Contadora, third parties could strengthen it by providing their services in defusing bilateral problems and crises which tended to have an adverse impact on the peace process. In El Salvador, the Catholic Church, which was mediating between the government and the revolutionary forces, could benefit from third party support. Such support could also aid Costa Rica to maintain its neutrality; concretely, a qualified observer group – possibly Canadian – could reduce tensions along the Costa Rican-Nicaraguan border.

Other participants proposed that: European countries should clearly and publicly state their objections to current United States policy in the region (only Sweden has done so); political, economic and military support for Nicaragua should have first priority; third parties should be particularly active and vigilant on human rights issues.

5. ***Non-Governmental Initiatives***

Discussion centred on the creation of a "Contadora of civil society", including churches, trade unions, academics, lawyers and non-governmental organizations in general. Members of these groups could influence their counterparts in the United States directly, as well as reaching the public through the mass media.

It was recognized that non-governmental organizations now played an international role. They were in contact with governments and had significant public constituencies. Moreover, the focus of private aid agencies had shifted from relief to broader issues of development and also peace and security. Consequently they could and should act as lobbies and as channels for "people-to-people" aid, promoting co-operative approaches and responding to local needs. For these and other reasons, they could play an important function in promoting dialogue and negotiations.

6. *Latin American Initiatives*

Various Roundtable participants reiterated the need for developing new Latin American regional organizations and, specifically, for placing responsibility for Central American security issues in the hands of the Latin American allies of the United States. In addition, existing regional organizations, such as ECLAC and SELA, should be strengthened; they could play important roles in creating conditions for dialogue and peace. Support was also expressed for the Cartagena and Lima Groups as regional initiatives.

5. "Open Forum": The Central American Crisis

Three Roundtable participants and representatives of Canada's three political parties were asked to give short presentations at a public meeting following the closed sessions. They were: Bernt Carlsson, Ambassador-at-large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden; Xabier Gorostiaga, Director, Nicaraguan Institute for Social and Economic Research, Managua, Nicaragua; William Ratliff, Research Associate, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Palo Alto, California, USA; Gerald Weiner, M.P., Conservative Party of Canada, Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs; Pauline Jewett, M.P., Foreign Policy Critic, New Democratic Party of Canada; Warren Allmand, M.P., Liberal Party of Canada. Their interventions are summarized below.

Bernt Carlsson

Canada as a North American nation, a neighbour of the United States, and situated geographically between the superpowers, is in a unique position to evaluate international events concerning the Americas. Canada is also sensitive to problems of security, arms control and disarmament. The political parties, churches and non-governmental organizations of your country are active in international affairs. They are listened to and very much respected in Europe as well as other parts of the world. The initiative of calling a meeting on Central America to focus attention on this region is of great value as there are many international problems which compete for attention. The situation in Central America is both difficult and serious.

The problems of Central America emanate from the region; they were not instigated by any outside forces. The vast majority of the

Central American people has been forced to live in poverty, illiteracy and oppression. Although peace between states has prevailed, there has been in most of the countries of the region no peace between rulers and ruled. For these countries one can even speak of a constant warfare against the people by their own governments. These countries have outdated political systems, where social and economic change is long overdue. For example, in Guatemala, repression has not only been directed against the left – Communists, Socialists and trade unions – but against the entire political spectrum, including the Christian Democrats who have lost many people to death squads. The Guatemalan oligarchy has not caught up with the twentieth century. Indeed, the progressive forces in Central America have been trying for a long time to bring about the same kinds of political changes that were achieved in Europe by the French Revolution.

Change in Central America has also been delayed by the position taken by the United States. The United States was not originally a party to the current conflict in the region. If it had not intervened, it would not have suffered from the developments in Central America.

Developments in Central America, after all, should be seen from the perspective of the region's people. That is the only criterion that can be applied. You cannot ask if developments in Central America benefit a great power. The criteria to be applied are those of the people of Central America. How, then, do we identify what is for their benefit?

If you were to be born anywhere in Nicaragua, statistically the chances are that you would be born in a poor and illiterate family. What kind of a political system would you choose? Whether you are a Socialist, a Liberal or a humanistic Conservative, I believe that you would opt for the system which provides the greatest possible improvement in your, and your family's, living standards. If you were born in Nicaragua, it is not unlikely that you would favour the Sandinistas. In the period since the victory of the revolution in 1979, they have achieved remarkable progress. Many of the changes taking place in Nicaragua have benefited its people.

The Sandinistas have done away with a highly stratified society. The position of women – 50 per cent of the population – has been transformed. Law and order have been introduced. Great efforts have been made to eliminate extreme poverty and to distribute social benefits in a more equal fashion. Since the victory of the

Sandinista revolution in 1979, you are less likely to find yourself subject to the whims of corrupt policemen or other officials.

But what about human rights? The situation in Nicaragua may not be ideal, but it must also be stated that there has hardly been a government in Nicaragua which has placed as much stress on human rights as the present one. Moreover, there appears to have been little outside interest in human rights in Nicaragua prior to 1979.

By focusing on Nicaragua, one should not ignore positive developments elsewhere in Central America. The example of Costa Rica and its stable democratic development since 1948 is well known. Nicaragua and Costa Rica, in different ways, represent models of positive development.

The purpose of this conference is to discuss ways of improving the Central American situation, especially with reference to the Contadora initiative and what Canada could do to further it. There has been unanimous agreement that the Contadora initiative should be supported. The sessions of the conference have been very constructive. The proposals which have been put forward must be given serious consideration. A further meeting could prove very positive.

Xabier Gorostiaga

The Roundtable has been seeking pragmatic, flexible and viable solutions to the Central America crisis. By itself, it has been a model on how the crisis should be approached.

Canada is extremely important for Central America. It is not an imperialistic country and Latin Americans have a special sympathy for Canada. It is a close friend and neighbour of the United States, and we believe that Canada can influence its neighbour to adopt a more flexible and accommodating policy toward Nicaragua. Together with European countries, Canada could play a very important role. The European Economic Community countries met in San José, Costa Rica, last year to discuss a special project of European relations with Central America. They will be meeting again in Luxembourg in November, and we believe that a Canadian presence in this developing relation is very important. The Central American crisis, unfortunately, will be a prolonged one and it is important to consider policies for the next several years.

First, it must be noted that the Central American drama is worsening. About 200,000 people have been killed during the last five years. There are approximately two million refugees or displaced people. There is an accute economic crisis. According to ECLAC statistics, the average per capita income in the region is now at the 1964 level. In Nicaragua alone, the economic costs of the war in the last three years come to $1,500 million; this in a country whose annual exports average $400 million. More than 12,000 people have been killed by the *contras* in addition to the 50,000 who died and the 100,000 who were wounded in the civil war and insurrection against Somoza.

What is happening in Guatemala today is even worse than what happened in Nicaragua under Somoza. Nobody talks about Guatemala, but probably the first Indian Revolution in the entire history of Latin America is taking place there. The country's military, however, maintains what can be called a permanent policy of genocide against the Indian and peasant majority.

Central America is in a dramatic situation. Rather than pragmatic solutions, we are witnessing an escalating militarization despite the efforts of Contadora. The Contadora negotiations continue, but the military escalation also continues.

If we can provide a clear diagnosis of the situation, we can also begin to formulate solutions. There is an accumulation of crises in the region – economic crisis, social crisis, the worst income distribution in Latin America. But Central America is not a poor region. It is potentially rich. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the region experienced the highest growth rates in the world, but it was growth without equity, a distorted form of growth which caused the social and political explosion we are witnessing today. The top 10 percent of the population absorbs 50 percent of national income and the bottom 50 percent barely survives on 15 percent. When, for example, the Guatemalan people tried to correct this, the United States intervened in 1954 and the country has experienced permanent electoral fraud since then. The popular fronts which are struggling in Central America today include Christian Democrats, Social Democrats and a variety of radical, popular organizations of Christians, workers, students, women and Indians. There is a social upheaval in the region.

These economic, social and political crises have come together simultaneously with a geopolitical crisis. The region's oligarchies would not have been able to maintain their power to the present

date without the direct and full political and military support of the United States. A historical breakthough is now taking place. The "banana republics" – these small and poor peripheral countries in the backyard – are demanding independence and respect. But Central America is being made into a battle ground of East-West and other tensions. These are not Central American problems; they have been injected into the region by the United States.

We can visualize a series of possible scenarios in Central America for the next months and years. The first is the possibility of a direct United States invasion of Nicaragua. I say invasion rather than intervention since that is already taking place. There are nine United States military bases in Honduras and fourteen in the Panama Canal Zone; there are permanent United States military manoeuvres in Honduras, and on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of the isthmus. However, public opinion in the United States, in Canada, Europe and especially in Latin America is against invasion. The Central American people are prepared to fight it. Nicaragua can mobilize 300,000–400,000 people for a prolonged war, another Vietnam. On the other hand, there is a scenario for negotiations – Contadora regional negotiations; Manzanillo bilateral negotiations between the United States and Nicaragua; La Palma internal negotiations between the Duarte government and the FDR-FMLN in El Salvador. This is a less likely scenario because the present United States Administration displays no political will for negotiations.

The most probable scenario is a combination of the two. It is the existing situation – a sort of low intensity war, a war of attrition, especially against Nicaragua. But Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras are also proxy countries for this war. The United States appears only in the background, as with the *contras* who are financed, organized and directed by the United States.

It is important to analyze this low intensity war, but it is more important to support the second scenario – that is, flexible and pragmatic negotiations. Crises also open new roads; they raise opportunities and challenges. Central America is a challenge to Latin America, a test for the emergence of a Bolivarian position. Latin American problems must be solved by Latin Americans. There is a possibility that Central America will be allowed to adopt a middle position, to stay in the middle. The only real alignment of Central America will be with Latin America. This is a challenge for all of us, including Canadians and the people of the United States.

William Ratliff

The topic of discussion at this conference has been "Negotiations for Peace in Central America." That is to say, we did not meet to discuss what minor and major changes we want to see in Central America, though those inevitably were in our thoughts and came up at the Roundtable. Mainly the conference focused on the mechanisms for working toward long-term goals in a peaceable manner. Negotiations for – arguing and talking toward – peace.

Certain facts are clear. Central America belongs to Central Americans. But for the foreseeable future the United States is going to maintain an active interest in the region, as are some other countries, including Mexico and Cuba. There will be political, social and economic change in the region. If it cannot be achieved by peaceful means, then it will come through violence. And it is not the least bit certain that the change achieved in individual countries through violence will be constructive. What is more, the violence almost certainly will spread to other countries, for when peaceful resolutions are impossible, military confrontations are inevitable and often catching.

I don't think I am unduly reflecting the professional bias of a historian when I say that it is essential for us to understand history if we are to respond constructively to developments and conditions in Central America today. We must understand history by reading it thoroughly and objectively. And then we must be prepared to go beyond history – that is, beyond the scars and prejudices history has left – in order to work out real and lasting solutions to the problems encountered there.

One of the main problems I find today, which is critical when we are discussing the prospects for negotiations, is that many people tend to see, or at least present, complex issues in anti-historical, simplistic blacks and whites which encourage pontifical intonation and inflated rhetoric. This impedes understanding and escalates irrationality, "shooting from the hip" and dogmatism which result in half-baked, often destructive discussion, debates and policies. Depth, objectivity and balance are lost.

Let me give you several examples of the destructive bias and one-sided advocacy which do us such harm today. Many, including most of the delegates to this conference, and the speakers today, have focused on what they see as the ignorance and biases of the US Government and the bad policies which have flowed from them. I

agree with some of these criticisms, but by no means all of them. Many of the common critiques themselves reflect precisely the lack of objectivity and imbalance I alluded to above. I will illustrate some of them for you.

How many who say the United States pushed (and is pushing) Nicaragua into the Soviet camp know that for 18 months under President Carter the US gave – and facilitated – far more economic aid to the Sandinistas than any other government in the world? Those who do know this sometimes rejoin, "Ah, yes, but not *military* aid, which the Sandinistas needed too." But the US was prepared to offer military training and aid. But it didn't work out. Why? Because, as a North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) study put it, "The FSLN aimed against all historical precedent to build a professional army with Cuban mentors and Western military aid." That objective may have made sense to top FSLN leaders at the time. But you don't need to approve of US policies toward Cuba to see that the decision to challenge 20 years of US history and political opinion head-on was to accept the very high probability of provoking precisely the confrontation which ensued and is with us in an increasingly bloody form today. Recall also that the United States was *not* supporting the *contra* war at that time.

Both sides are guilty also of wreckless rhetoric and blinding bias. Most of you are only too aware of the shortcomings of the United States and its current Central American allies. Daniel Ortega's inflated rhetorical remarks – on the imminent US invasion of Nicaragua, for example – are at least as numerous as President Reagan's.

But let's talk of some examples below the formal policy-making levels. During the Somoza years many human rights advocates paid close attention to – and even funded – Nicaragua's Permanent Commission on Human Rights, which reported on the transgressions of the Somoza government. But the Commission's high reputation didn't survive the change of government and reports of similar violations by the Sandinistas were discounted. Further, why have so many human rights advocates closed their ears to the words of Alvaro José Baldizon, who was chief of the Sandinista's own special investigations commission of the Minister of the Interior until he left Nicaragua in July 1985. He has confirmed virtually every abuse reported by the Permanent Commission, and some other besides.

Or take the so-called *contras*. The very term by which they are

popularly known is loaded. They are not just hoards of sadistic counter-revolutionary thugs recycled from Somoza's National Guard, as some would have us believe. The vast majority opposed Somoza, some – including Eden Pastora, Arturo Cruz and Alfonso Robelo, and many lesser officials like Baldizon – in important positions with the Sandinistas during, and for years after, the war against the dictator. It is just that over the past four years they have become as disillusioned with the policies of the nine *commandantes* as they were with Somoza and his National Guard. And while it is true that US aid to the *contras* is support from abroad for an insurgent army, so was aid to the Sandinistas and the broad Nicaraguan front from Costa Rica, Venezuela, Panama and Cuba during 1978-79. And what is more, US support for the *contras* came *after* Sandinista support across its borders in 1979-80 for the FMLN; that's in the historical record, as even some Sandinista leaders, and their lawyers before the World Court, have admitted.

The first order of business today is an accommodation between the United States and Nicaragua. There is every reason to believe that neither side wants one enough at present to allow the concessions which would make an accommodation possible. The United States, and other countries, have every right to expect Nicaragua to refrain from efforts to overthrow neighhbouring governments. Also if the Sandinista government is prepared to accommodate the vast majority of the Nicaraguan people – including those who originally supported the war against Somoza, the *contra* forces will be reduced to the Somocistas who can be isolated and deported or defeated, with the help of the United States, if necessary. The United States must be prepared to live with some version of the Sandinista government.

How does Contadora fit into this picture? The simple fact is that Contadora will not work until the Central American countries, the United States and Cuba really want it to work, as demonstrated by their willingness to make serious compromises in order to work out domestic and bilateral problems. In the meantime, the Contadora countries should persist in their frustrating efforts so that there will be a fine-tuned proposal on hand when it is needed.

Those of us who are not formulating policies must make every effort to be as thorough, balanced and honest as possible in our research and evaluations of the region. We may have to tone down our rhetoric and challenge our friends as well as those we have long opposed, or else recognize the wilful superficiality of our analyses and solutions.

Gerald Weiner

I feel that I have spent my entire life working to build a caring community, and what kind of a community can that be if the human rights of others are trampled upon? I have watched Mr. Clark's concern for human rights, whether it be human rights in the Soviet Union or in South Africa or, indeed, now in Central America. A constituent wrote me a letter this week and asked "why can we not put the same sort of pressure on Guatemala that we are applying to South Africa?" I must reflect more on that, but human rights is an area of concern to us and Central America is a sphere in which we must become very active.

There are some initiatives concerning Central America which we have been encouraging. Contadora, for a while, seemed to be going nowhere, but a new draft is now being prepared. We've heard about bilateral irritants – Nicaragua-Honduras, Nicaragua-Costa Rica, Nicaragua-United States – and they are significant. What about Canada's position? Well, we have expressed our very strong support for Contadora. We have made it clear to the United States and everyone else that we don't want any third party intervention in the area. We have heard how poverty and socio-economic conditions, the quality of life, are the real problems in Central America and we agree; that is the reason why we have made such a dramatic and dynamic effort to increase our aid programme to all of Central America. We keep saying that Contadora is the only opportunity for peace. There are major problems. But as to the Roundtable's proposal concerning its institutionalization, we have some problems about creating another institution with a permanent secretariat. Of course, we want to continue working very actively with all the multilateral institutions – in the United Nations, the IADB. . . we certainly favour increasing all kinds of aid to Central America as recent ministerial trips to the region have indicated. You have suggested the establishment of a Canadian embassy in Managua. I think that missions, consuls and embassies in all of the countries would probably be useful. However, before we can entertain this idea, we would probably want to conduct an overall review of our consular offices. Perhaps that could be a function of the task force.

You ask Canada to oppose the United States position toward Nicaragua in international financial institutions. At the 25th Anniversary Meeting of the IADB, I was very clear in this respect. All aid should be provided on technical grounds, and I clearly stated that we are opposed to what they are doing; the Bank has no business playing politics and each project should be considered on its own merits.

The Canadian Government is most concerned about the tensions in Central America. The basic causes of instability in the region are economic and social in nature, but militarization and the intrusion of an East-West dimension involving both Cuba, Eastern Bloc countries and the United States, have exacerbated tensions. The promotion of peace, social justice and economic development are the highest priorities for Canadian foreign policy in Central America.

Pauline Jewett

The New Democratic Party, which is the Socialist Party of Canada, has taken and continues to take a very strong position on non-intervention in Central America. It has been particularly critical of United States intervention and, above all, United States support of the *contras*, of the mining of Nicaraguan harbours and of the American refusal to have the International Court ruling be binding upon it. The reason that there has not been a comparable criticism of Soviet activity in Central America is because we don't think there has been comparable activity. We, in the New Democratic Party, have all followed Nicaraguan developments closely and we visit the region with great frequency.

To our knowledge, intervention in Central America, both historically and currently, has been almost entirely on the part of the United States. Although one may be particularly critical of the present administration, it seems to me that the historical record bespeaks a great power attitude toward "their backyard". The real difference between the Democrats and the Republicans is that the Democrats try to be nicer – they don't equate the *contras* to founding fathers, let alone tell governments to cry "uncle." The Democrats are nicer but basically they share the same fundamental philosophy. They are progressive but they still see it as the United States' business to run Central America.

In response to Mr. Ratliff's talk, I don't think Nicaragua wants to intervene in its neighbours' affairs. Nor do I think that it wants to be aligned only with Cuba or the Soviet Union. I think it wants friends everywhere and certainly it has welcomed the efforts of the previous and present Canadian governments to be friendly. The real problem is that the United States, regardless of the party in power, will not follow a policy of non-intervention in the affairs of Latin America in general and Central America in particular.

How much the Canadian Government and Canadians can do is, of

course, the real problem for us. Certainly, we have been very supportive of the Contadora process. I am really quite impressed with what we have done at the technical level. We haven't been politically as strong as we might be in our talks with Washington and with members of Congress who we know are concerned about Central America. I don't know how often you can irritate Washington in one week, but I suppose that's the problem.

I am concerned that the independence of our conduct of our foreign policy can be eroded very seriously indeed, if the incredible continental drift that we're engaged in – both in defence and economic matters – continues. The deeper we become part of "fortress America", whether in our defence arrangements or in matters of trade, the less chances there are of taking any independent initiatives vis-à-vis Central America or anywhere else.

I really am concerned that both the previous and the present governments have not been forceful enough, in public and open criticism of the United States. When we don't say a word about the mining of Nicaraguan harbours, then the natural conclusion drawn in Washington is that we are not primarily concerned about the development of human rights and of democracy, and about putting an end to conflict in Central America.

Warren Allmand

We're talking about an area that is comprised of six countries, about 20 million people in an area about the size of Atlantic Canada. It is an area that has been subject to war, conflict, oppression and exploitation, political injustice, economic injustice and so on, for generations. But this has been particularly the case in recent years in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. Moreover, there are not only conflicts within states, but there are also conflicts between the states and intervention from outside the region; thousands and hundreds of thousands have died, disappeared and become refugees.

There's a strong consensus that we as Canadians should support the Contadora as the principal hope for development, justice and peace in the region. We must do everything within our power to support it and encourage it. The goals of the Contadora process are to limit arms in the region, ban external support for insurgent groups in other countries, ban the presence of foreign military bases and advisors, limit inter-regional arms transfers and bring

about more political pluralism. This is what we have been discussing at our meetings in the last couple of days. But all of that won't mean very much if it's not accompanied by a "Contadora Economica", an Economic Contadora to go hand-in-hand with the political one. For the basic causes of the problems in the region are economic; as has been pointed out, the conflicts stem from economic problems and the imbalance between the rich and the poor, the inequitable distribution of wealth.

The principal but not the sole obstacle to the achievement of Contadora's goals is the policy of the United States Government. The United States Government continues to look on Central America as its backyard. Self-interest, and not the interest of the six Central American countries, is the inspiration of its policies there. The United States continues to look on those countries as economic colonies – whether it is stated overtly or not. It refuses to recognize their full sovereignty or their right to self-determination, to go their own way as they see fit and to differ with the United States without fear of retaliation and sanction. One could understand United States concern if any of these countries were seriously threatening United States security. But as far as I, and many others, can see, there is no evidence of this. Time and again, for example, Nicaragua has stated that it wants to be non-aligned, not a member of the Warsaw Pact. Its voting record at the United Nations and other international fora backs that up; Nicaragua is voting like a non-aligned country and, as a matter of fact, a non-aligned country in the middle of the non-aligned group.

The United States has violated, as was pointed out in the conference, both international laws and its own domestic law by funding the *contras* and by mining Nicaragua's harbours. United States actions demonstrate that they are really looking for military solutions and not for peaceful negotiated solutions; that their support of Contadora is lip service and not really sincere. In their application of standards for democracy and respect for human rights, what they demand of Nicaragua is much higher than the standards that they apply to other countries in South America and Central America, or with respect to South Africa or any other country they deal with. If you trace the development of democracy in the United States, you will find that they have themselves failed the tests they now apply to Nicaragua.

What can we do as Canadians? Well, I think the first thing we have to do as an ally and a friend of the United States – as a NATO ally and as a NORAD ally – is to try to convince the United States that

this policy is wrong and to urge them to give real support to Contadora, not only in the interest of Central America but in their own long-term interest and that of the world. This we must do together with other United States allies – Holland, Belgium, France, Spain, Italy – and countries like Sweden. In this respect, I think that we can also provide encouragement to those groups in the United States that support policies oriented toward peace.

Second, Canada has to pursue these approaches in all the international fora where it is present – in the United Nations, in the International Monetary Fund, in the regional groups. We should also increase our economic and humanitarian aid, including aid to refugees. However, the granting of aid should be more sensitive to the behaviour of the recipient countries of the region with respect to their record on human rights and aggression against other countries.

I don't believe that Canada should become officially part of Contadora; but we have to indicate clearly our readiness to support Contadora in whatever way is appropriate. In the last couple of days we have discussed the possibility of an "outer ring" of countries that would provide support to Contadora. That is a real possibility which we should look at. Canada should provide financial and technical aid so that Contadora has a greater chance of succeeding. Aid could possibly be provided for setting up a secretariat, assisting peacekeeping and/or what seems to be the preferred route, a commission for verification and control. We should make it clear that we're ready to do all these things.

I also support the establishment of an embassy in Nicaragua, not only to improve our information about what's happening there and our communications with this very special country, but also to show greater support for their struggle to establish a democracy after years of Somoza's misrule. The idea came up at these meetings that there should also be a roving ambassador. It is true that our ambassador in Costa Rica covers Nicaragua, Panama and El Salvador but what people had in mind was a trouble-shooter type of ambassador who would be able to dedicate his time to these very serious problems without the ordinary responsibilities of the ambassador we now have in Costa Rica.

I would also like to see a greater emphasis in Canadian foreign policy on Latin and Central America. I often come to the conclusion that our churches and our NGOs are more active and involved in these countries than we are as a government. Greater

emphasis on the part of government would involve much greater support for research, publication, information, education, Spanish language training, everything that would help us improve our relations, and our knowledge and ties with Central America.

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